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ABSTRACT

Three papers concerning learning disabled adults and a list of resources available for disabled people are presented. The first paper, "Colin's Own Story," was written by a 16 year old learning disabled individual, and recounts his struggles and what it is like to be learning disabled. Two poems by the author further describe his emotions and feelings about life with his disability. In the second paper, "Learning Disabled Adults Face the World of Work," Dale Brown, a learning disabled adult, describes the problems this population faces in obtaining and retaining employment. The author relates that among the problems a learning disabled person must cope with are perceptual disabilities which cause such problems as accident proneness and trouble learning a sequence of tasks. The final paper by Lynn Park, "Forming a New Organization for Adults with Learning Disabilities," traces one woman's experiences, leading her to found the Association of Learning Disabled Adults, which is designed to educate the public and provide counseling and referral services. A short list of resources for further information on learning disabilities is provided. (PHR)

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Learning Disability: Not Just A Problem Children Outgrow

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE
ON EMPLOYMENT OF
THE HANDICAPPED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Colin's Own Story

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Colin Corbett Ruffner, age 16, is the son of Robert H. Ruffner, director of communications for the President's Committee. When Colin learned we were doing an issue of the magazine which focused on learning disabilities, he asked if he could tell his story in his own words. He wanted people to understand not how others feel about a person with a learning disability, but rather how it feels to be the person whose life is affected by the decisions of those "others."

As Colin conscientiously explains to us, he is not an expert on learning disability. But his sensitive, candid statement of his life, his feelings and fears, tell what we too frequently miss: In his story, and his poems which follow, Colin gives us a glimpse we don't often see of the human being who is waiting behind all the statistics we see all too often.

I MUST FIRST STATE that I am not an expert on learning disability. I have had only one contact with it, and that's

with myself. So my reasons may not apply to everyone, and my story may not be the same in that light.

I have had what I consider a pretty hard school life so far. I can't honestly say that I've had a whole lot of fun. I blame a lot of things. First off, now in the late seventies, it has become all right for all types of people, groups, and so on to come out of the "closet." But during the most important years of my school life, 1966 to 1977, it was not all right to be different.

I could not read or write in the fifth grade. I was always in trouble. The schools just plain blamed me, and, of course, my folks. But my mother and dad supported me because they knew I was getting the shaft.

My parents went to meeting after meeting looking for help with all sorts of "pros." Always the same answer: "Colin has just a few problems, nothing that a good doctor can't fix."

Well, during all of this time, I felt like hell. They—meaning the schools—didn't want me in their classes because they didn't have enough time for me. The old—"Why worry about him when little Jack and Ann are doing so well?"

Well, to make myself feel like someone, I had to pick a role, with a make-believe world. I made myself into the meanest, baddest little fifth grader you've ever seen. And it went on for a number of years, until it got so that even I believed it. Of course, this led to getting into trouble with school people and even with the police. The midnight knock on the front door.

With all this, I was in and out of just about every "special" school around. And finally I was back in public school. Which only meant more trouble and, of course, a very big nasty reputation which goes along with all of this.

Then I took the big step and quit school. I refused to go to another "special" school, and I refused to beg my way back into the public schools. Now, I'm between schools or "lost in the cracks."

The only other thing that I can say about all of this is that I hope with the new understanding and point of view that people have of learning disability today, and with the new tolerance of people who aren't like everyone else, that the Billys, Marys, Tommys and Sues, and their parents won't have to go through the nightmare that myself and my family have been through.

—Colin Corbett Ruffner

Virginia

As I walk these streets
with the cold Virginia rain
pouring down
All I can think of is
how the years have gone
Taking our love with them—
Our love has fallen
Like the first of summer's rays.
No longer do I feel you beside
me,
to help me through in
everything I do.

As I walk along,
I wonder where our love has
flown
And if I'll ever be the man
I tried to be.
As my tears start to flow,
I wonder why you ran away
and if you'll ever
Come back to stay.

Acceptance

Sometimes silence says it all
and words left hanging never
fall
But you could turn my night
into day
You could say one word and,
We could be together
Like we should be.

Poetry by Colin Corbett Ruffner
Photographs by Al Whitley

Learning Disabled Adults Face the World of Work

LEARNING DISABLED (LD) adults frequently have problems finding and keeping jobs. Because the field of learning disabilities is so new, exact statistics are hard to locate. But according to Lauriel Anderson, coordinator of a research project involving twenty out-of-work young adults with learning disabilities, unemployment among this population is extremely high.[1] Learning disabled adults face prejudices in getting hired, and their handicaps may make many types of work hard for them.

Despite the problems, many LD adults make strong contributions to society. Joan King Herring of Houston moderates a TV talk show five days a week. She memorizes her script to accommodate for her reading problem. The late Nelson Rockefeller, former Vice President, had dyslexia and wrote about his coping skills in *TV Guide* in 1976. Jess Oppenheimer, former producer of "I Love Lucy," had visual perceptual problems so severe that he often saw double.

Strong evidence exists that many geniuses of the past were learning disabled. Thomas Edison was thrown out of school and educated by his mother. Albert Einstein flunked math, leading his teacher to believe that he was retarded. Leonardo Da Vinci's manuscripts have many reversals which he claimed were a secret code. But experts have commented that there are reversals within the reversals. Ten royal tutors tried without success to teach Hans Christian Anderson to read. He dictated his stories to a scribe.

Yet society places many barriers between the LD adult and success in employment. For example, Dian Ridenour, director of Time Out to Enjoy, a self-help network of LD adults, explained what happens when she applies for social work jobs:

"Because I am so competent, my resume is pulled every time," she stated. "But as soon as they find out I can't read or write, they don't give me the job. When I offer them alternatives, they don't believe me.

"At one interview, they told me, 'Well, you have to fill out charts.'

"I said, 'I can sit down with a ward clerk and dictate what they need on the charts very rapidly, and the chart can go with the patient.'

"They told me I might not be able to find a ward clerk.

"'In that case,' I countered, 'I could go up with the patient and talk to the staff and it would eventually be placed on the chart.'

"They told me that was too time-consuming and that I might not be able to find someone to talk to when I went up with the patient.

"I offered to put it on a tape recorder and even offered to buy my own. Still they showed me the door."

The term "learning disability" has been used to describe a variety of problems in acquiring, storing, and/or retrieving information. According to the

U.S. Office of Education, a learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language in the presence of normal or above average intelligence. A learning disability is not mental retardation or an emotional problem.

Learning disabled people have perceptual problems—trouble taking information in through their senses and/or processing that information for the performance of perceptual-motor tasks. Some LD adults have problems primarily with visual processing and others have more trouble with auditory processing. Others have equal difficulty with both. Many LD adults have apraxia, where the brain has trouble telling the body what to do. Others have problems with directionality, telling left from right and learning how to get to a new place.

Hal Ewoldt described how his problems affected him when he was a battery salesman:

"I had to run a cash register and it's hard for me to push buttons and make change. I couldn't even run the adding machine. I had a rough time.

"Let's say I had to take a battery out of a car and put a new one in. I had to use all the different tools to get the darned battery out. Not to spill acid on the car, on myself, and on the customer was difficult. Then I had to get the new battery off the shelf. I had to climb up a step ladder. Let's say the numbers were US2PCA53. I'd often reverse the numbers and take the wrong one off the shelf. It wouldn't even fit the car. And it was really embarrassing having the customer waiting and waiting for me to put his battery in.

"Changing a battery took a lot of eye-hand coordination, to get it to fit in there right, to get the positive cable onto the positive stub, to get the negative cable hooked up to the negative stub.

"I used to sometimes have to work on alternators and generators. Sometimes they'd jack up a truck and I'd have to get under there and take out a part. I had a rough time seeing where the part was, and once I found it I had to use my eye-hand coordination to take the part out. I had to find the right size crescent wrench, then get it on the thing and turn it the right way. It'd take a long time, and they would make me stay under the truck until I got it done. Sometimes I couldn't do it.

"When I had to deliver batteries, I had a 1½ ton truck. I'd have to deliver these batteries all over Denver and I'd get lost. I had to go to the gas station and say, 'How do you get to this street?' Or I would have to just keep on going until I found someone who knew where it was. I had a hard time driving the truck. I couldn't tell how far away the cars behind me were. To back the truck up, once I found the place, usually I scraped the side of the building.

"I got fired three weeks later. That job gave me too many problems! More than even I could compensate for!"

Gale Bell, Vice President of Association of Learning Disabled Adults, a self-help group in Washington, D.C., described how her auditory problems affected her job as a secretary:

"My supervisor was upset because he did not like the fact that people I worked for had to repeat instructions several times. One of my bosses asked me to take notes at a meeting. I refused to do it. I said that it would be ridiculous for me to take notes. They didn't get angry. They just looked at me as if I were crazy.

"I was handed a long list of criticisms of my work. It included (1) took too long to learn how to operate the new mag card typewriter, (2) had trouble getting telephone messages correctly, and (3) had trouble understanding and carrying out directions.

"I quit before I was fired. What made it

even more upsetting was that this was the second job where I had to quit for similar reasons."

Perceptual problems have several undesirable effects on the person's work. Some of them are—

Inefficiency. It takes LD adults longer to do the same tasks as other workers. It is not uncommon for LD adults to punch out and then return to the workplace to complete their tasks.

Errors. Learning disabled adults make mistakes frequently, because they do not see and/or hear correctly. The only way to keep from making errors is to be careful and go slowly. This causes inefficiency (problem no. 1).

Accident proneness. Some LD adults are easily startled. Those with visual perceptual problems often bump into things.

Difficulty with basic academic skills. This includes trouble with making change, filling out an order form, reading instructions, and writing a memo.

Trouble learning a sequence of tasks. Supervisors often report it takes longer to train adults with learning disabilities.

Since their handicap is invisible, sometimes unknown even to themselves, no allowance is made for it. Their mistakes are assumed to be their own fault. Robert Schieber, a file clerk, stated that his boss thought he was mixing the files up on purpose, when, in fact, he was having reversal problems.

Learning disabled adults are often accused of being careless or slow. As they improve, they rarely receive any praise, even though they may triumph after a long struggle. When they speak openly about their handicaps, they are often met with hostility and disbelief. Hal Ewoldt described how one potential employer told him to "Go to a farm and work for six months so you can become a man."

Ray Lundgreen was a manager at a grocery store in St. Paul, Minnesota. After fifteen years on the job, he asked his boss for a slight change in hours, so he could take classes. His boss asked him why. Here are Mr. Lundgreen's words:

"'I was just coming out of the closet, you know, so I told him I was dyslexic.'

"'What's that?' he said.

"'It means I can't read,' I said.

"He didn't say anything. A few days later, he told me, 'Put on a vest, you're a bagger'" (one who puts the customer's groceries into a bag).

Mr. Lundgreen is presently fighting his demotion through the State Human Rights Office of Minnesota.

Many LD adults find prejudice even when they do not discuss their handicaps. This bias is based on their physical appearance. Chester Poremba, Chief of Psychology, Children's Hospital, Denver, Colorado, explained, "These people look different. They can look odd. They have mannerisms, posturings, strange physical gestures, things like that. Their intensity is different."

The "odd" appearance is caused by "soft neurological signs." The term refers to a host of things which result from a disorganized central nervous system. Examples include staring, turning the head instead of moving the eyes, hyperreaction to stimuli (i.e., looking extremely startled when someone drops a pencil), inability to look at people in the eye, or holding the head tilted.

A twenty-eight-year-old LD nurse explained, "It's not a cognitive prejudice they have against you. It's not as if you were black and they were white or you were in a wheelchair. In those cases, they at least know that they are prejudiced. But in this case, you just make them uneasy and they don't know why and you don't know why. They shy away. They won't even try to understand."

Learning disabled adults not only have problems with people's reactions

to them, but with their inability to react correctly to people. Because their perception is poor, their responses are frequently incorrect. People with visual perceptual problems, for example, would have trouble deciphering the emotions behind facial expressions. They might not be able to judge the proper distance between people for social conversation. Those with auditory perceptual problems have trouble judging the feelings behind a tone of voice. Many people with auditory problems hear incorrectly, thus replying to the wrong words.

Some experts in learning disabilities feel that employers should show more understanding of the LD employee.

Chester Poremba, for example, believes that the employer should adjust the job around a person's strengths and weaknesses. "If a person has problems reading or writing, don't put him on a job requiring reading or writing. Or let him

develop compensations. If he has difficulty with time, don't put him in a job which absolutely requires accuracy. Look at arbitrary rules and regulations that do not really affect output or quality. Do you really have to punch a time clock on the dot? Or why tell someone they have to get a mailing out by noon, if it really won't get mailed until tomorrow?"

Katherine Tillotson, chairperson of the Post-Secondary Committee of Association for Children with Learning Disabilities and director of a vocational program for LD adults, stated that the supervisor had to realize that it would take longer to train an LD person, but that "once they are trained, they are very capable."

This extra attention could be extremely profitable for the employer, since LD adults have many strong points. They often overcompensate for their handicaps, turning their weaknesses into strengths. Susan Bauman, who did a follow-up study of former students from special education classes for learning disabilities, reported that "As a group, all of the subjects were willing workers, eager to try to follow instructions about completing assigned tasks, and meticulous about work attendance."[2]

Finding ways of coping with their handicaps takes a lot of creativity. Their slightly incorrect perception can lead

them to have a slightly different point of view which can help solve problems. One LD man, with a twinkle in his eye, said: "I got so good at covering up my errors, that I now have a real talent for whitewashing mistakes, whether they're mine or my immediate supervisor's."

Hal Ewoldt, after long years of "being fired and turned down," is presently representing handicapped people in regards to their employment and training needs to the State of Colorado. He counsels handicapped people, attends conferences, and gives speeches.

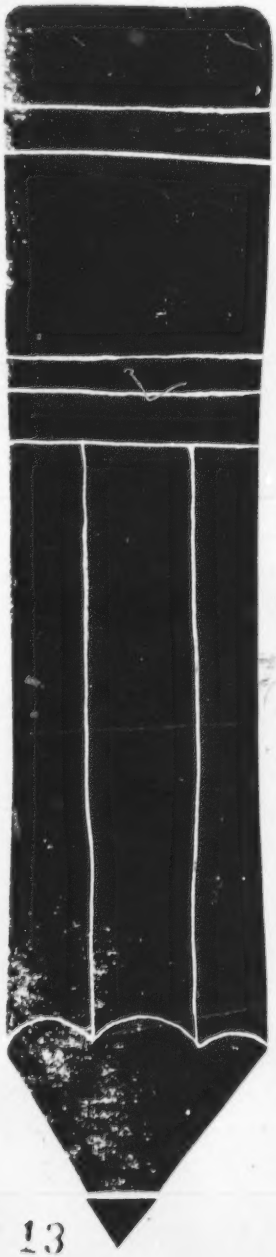
"I communicate well with people," he stated. "I think I have a sincere feeling for any type of handicapped person. I show them that I can work in a professional situation. Just give me the right chance and let me use my strong points and work around my weak points." Hal still has problems filling out forms and writing letters. "They have to rewrite my letters sometimes, change my sentence structure, make it more grammatical. It's very helpful, but I'm sure it's time-consuming for both my supervisors."

Ray Lundgreen, the demoted grocery store manager, began a referral service for adults and children with learning disabilities. He held meetings of LD adults for Minnesota Association for Children with Learning Disabilities.

All over the country, LD adults are forming self-help groups to advocate for their rights and to share coping skills.

Dian Ridenour explained, "The self-help groups can help LD adults with job problems. If there are a few good leaders, they can help the LD people look at the alternatives realistically. They can help people with their self-esteem. A lot of these people think they can't do anything.

"We LD people have to know our strengths and weaknesses realistically. I don't mean some psychologist telling us we can or can't do something. If that were the case, I wouldn't have gotten



past sixth grade. We have to know our strong points so we can find a job that uses them.

"Some of us have to look at alternatives to regular employment, for example, self-employment. If you can get into the arts, it might be a good idea to do that. Small-scale farming can be good for some LD people.

"We share good coping mechanisms at every meeting. At our last one, someone suggested that a person with an auditory sequencing problem ask her supervisor to put instructions in writing. Another person suggested that we trade jobs we can't do for ones we can do. Her coworker was very shy. So she offered to make all of the phone calls for her, in return for her coworker's doing the math on her invoices, which she couldn't do because of her reversal problems."

Successful LD adults must analyze their strengths. They must convince someone to hire them. Once on the job, they must find some way around their handicaps and convince their coworkers and supervisors to help them with tasks that they find difficult.

Many LD adults succeed through their own determination, intelligence, and creativity. Many find people such as Chester Poremba and Katherine Tillotson to assist them. Others join or organize self-help groups to share experiences and coping mechanisms.

—Dale Brown

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2. Bauman, Susan S., "The Social Adjustment of Adolescents with Brain Dysfunction: The Parental View," paper presented at Orthopsychiatric Conference, 1975.

(This article previously appeared in *Arise* magazine, June 1979.)

Dale Brown is a learning disabled adult and director of the Association of Learning Disabled Adults. She recently joined the staff of the Office of Communications.

Forming A New Organization for Adults With Learning Disabilities

IMAGINE LIVING IN A world where nothing is stable. Where the space between your body and other objects is not clearly perceived, and the message your brain sends your limbs never quite manifests itself in the proper action. A world where even the act of walking requires immense concentration because the floor seems to shift under your feet.

The simplest acts—holding a pencil, exerting the proper pressure to produce a legible impression without breaking the point, reading a sign, finding your way back to a previous location—are incredibly difficult.

What is this? A simulation of the free-fall conditions in a space capsule? The temporary effect of some mind-altering chemical?

No. These are just a few of the manifestations of a widespread, but often unacknowledged, invisible disability. Invisible because, unlike paralysis or blindness or cerebral palsy, it doesn't show. Unacknowledged because, according to many professionals, it's something you outgrow. Thousands of people—how many no one knows for sure—know differently. They are learning disabled adults.

"Learning disabilities," you may think. "I've heard of that. Dys . . . dyslexia—that has something to do with reading problems. They have special classes for children with that problem, don't they?"

The answer is yes, but a qualified yes. There are some classes for children with dyslexia, but in the schools many children slip through without being diagnosed properly. They are the slow learners, the unrewarding students who scrape by.

In the words of one woman, "When I was growing up, no one knew there was such a thing as a learning disability. There were no tests—no tutors. I was a very poor student, and passed from grade to grade only because the county where I lived had no grading system."

Another woman says that she "worked her butt off for C's in high school," and that it wasn't until she started analyzing her low production rate, during a college work-study experience in an electronics factory, that she began to find the clue. Many of the mistakes she made were hearing-related, she discovered; but tests showed that her hearing was normal.

Then a counselor recommended that

she read a book on brain injured children. "Something clicked," says Dale Brown. "I realized there was something wrong with me, that I wasn't neurotic or crazy, that I was coping with a very real handicap."

Dale Brown has multiple learning disabilities. She knows about isolation, the feeling of being different. As a child she had to work at what was easy play for other children.

To learn to jump rope, she had to analyze what was involved, then practice and more practice, at first laying a rope on the ground and deliberately jumping from one side to another. It took her five years to get her driver's license.

More specifically, her problems include difficulty hearing conversation over background noise, and trouble with motor planning—it's hard for her brain to tell her body what to do.

"But I could read," she says, "so the schools just assumed I wasn't trying, and pretty much left me alone. Now I do my best thinking on an electric typewriter." At age 24, her handwriting resembles that of a child. That it is still a laborious, difficult activity is apparent.

Out of her own experience, Brown has founded an organization to give others with similar handicaps a place to meet, to find out that they're not unique and alone, to share triumphs—like the man who's learning to read at age 29—and to exchange skills.

The Association of Learning Disabled Adults (ALDA) has several purposes, among them public education and enlisting the help of educators, psychologists, counselors, and rehabilitation professionals, as well as regular discussion groups and recreational activities.

It was through her job as administrative assistant at the American Occupational Therapy Association in Rockville, Maryland, that Brown saw an advertisement for Time Out To Enjoy (TOTE), a Chicago-based group also devoted to learning disabled adults. She wrote to them and said that she'd like to start a chapter.

A month later she got the go-ahead and started to work. Several months later, "because the LD (learning disabled) population wasn't ready for a national group yet," ALDA came into being as an autonomous group in Metropolitan Washington, DC.

"We still coordinate with TOTE and with the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD), which has an adult committee, though it is a parent group and has a different focus. Both TOTE and ACLD have been very supportive. We all know that there's so much to do, and that we need to work together."

Not the least of what needs to be done is developing confidence and self-esteem in LD adults. Brown has given

this a great deal of thought.

Usually vivacious, she becomes almost solemn as she tries to explain: "Learning disabilities are a serious matter, not just a minor handicap. A major problem is that you so rarely get positive feedback as you advance—partly because it's an invisible handicap.

"We need respect when we do succeed in overcoming some part of our handicap, not scorn for having trouble in the first place. That's why it's so important to have a good public education program. If we can do that, it will be easier for people to come out and admit they are learning disabled."

Because learning disabilities have received so little attention, there are a lot of misconceptions to correct. Learning disabled adults are *not* . . . mentally retarded . . . lazy . . . not trying hard enough . . . or apt to be criminals.

This last makes Brown laugh. She says, "If there's a higher proportion of learning disabled people in jail, it's because we're the ones most likely to get *caught*. Have you ever considered how much perceptual coordination it takes to pull off something as simple as shoplifting?"

Gale Bell, a woman in her 30's with a background in fine arts, responds to others reactions to her learning disability: "Most people haven't the faintest idea what I'm talking about. They often have a blank, frightened, or belligerent look as I try to explain. Either they change the subject at the first opportunity—like in the middle of what I'm saying—or they deny that the problem exists, or make a joke."

Brown reports that people have said to her, "Gee, you seem so intelligent—you don't look handicapped."

"This is why I'd like to see more awareness of individual differences, as well as of learning disabilities. The worst cross we have to bear is that learning disabilities get confused with personal weaknesses. You see, no one has

perfect perception all the time.

"If you're upset and preoccupied and don't see your car keys in plain sight on the desk when you're looking for them, that's a temporary learning disability. Because you can concentrate harder and get it under control, you're liable to think the person with a learning disability is 'just not trying'."

What the general public doesn't realize is the range of problems (which can have differing degrees of severity and most likely are of genetic neurological origin) the learning disabled person has to cope with.

In addition to dyslexia (inability to read for a medical reason), there are dyscalculia (inability to do arithmetic), dysgraphia (inability to write), and dysphasis (impairment of the ability to speak or sometimes to understand language).

Also, there are difficulties with figure-ground perception (picking out an object from a background of competing objects), visual discrimination (telling the difference in objects), and the visual spatial perception (seeing things in the right order).

The visual difficulties have analogous hearing problems: Auditory figure-ground perception (hearing one sound against a background noise), auditory discrimination (differentiating between similar sounds like 19 and 90), and auditory sequencing (hearing sounds in the correct order).

Another way to categorize the problems of learning disability is in terms of three little-known senses that can be involved, in addition to seeing and hearing. The first of these senses involves the vestibular sense. This provides a sense of balance, left and right, and is one's "anchor to the world." Something taken for granted by the "normal" person, a dysfunction here produces insecurity because the person doesn't know where he or she is.

The second sense involves the proprioceptor, a sensory receptor which connects the limbs to the brain through nerve endings in the joints. This sense determines how you know where you are in space. When it's off, clumsiness is a result, as is difficulty in motor planning.

The third sense involves the sense of touch. If this tactile sense is disturbed, there can be trouble with such activities as holding a pencil, turning the pages of a book, or knowing how hard to press with a pen.

It was with this knowledge that Dale Brown set about forming an organization that would become a self-help network for learning disabled adults. When asked how she did it, she explained the steps that enabled her group to get substantial media coverage and enlarge from three people to more than 40 in just a few months.

"The first thing we did was establish a network. I called all the professionals I could find in the field of learning disability—who work mostly with children because adults are supposed to outgrow it—and asked them to refer any learning disabled adults they came in contact with to me.

"At the end of each call, I asked who else should know about our plans. I followed up each call with a letter, thanking the person for his or her time, giving each more information on ALDA, and asking each to tell others about us. When I started getting the same names over and over, I knew the network was pretty well established.

"Part of the process was making contact with the appropriate parents' organization. In our case this was ACLD. It was very important to make friends with this group *and* to establish that we were their partners, not the subordinates. I sought their cooperation, did favors for them.

"After we'd made a lot of speeches to parents, some of them came forward and admitted their own learning disabilities. They realized that they didn't have to be ashamed because they hadn't outgrown them.

"The next major step was publicity. We sent out press releases and talked to anybody who would listen. Out of this came two good newspaper stories, which brought more people to us.

"As a result of all this, there were 16 people at our first meeting five weeks later. These people formed our core group.

"The last thing we did in establishing our self-help group was to define the group's responsibilities. I told the professionals I talked with that 'we want people who can give as well as receive from a group situation.' Now we tell our members: 'This group can only do so much. We can't be everything to everybody, we have to be very clear about what we can do.'

"And we needed lots of support when we were getting started—people with the same disability, and good friends who were committed to the idea. The first month or so was really rough. But, it's easier to keep going when you know you have people with you."

Dale Brown started ALDA not much more than six months ago. Already a governing structure has evolved with a board of directors, and executive board, and a professional advisory committee. There are regular open meetings—for learning disabled adults and other interested people—that feature background information and talks by LD adults on how they've coped with their disability.

Topics have included: What are our handicaps? How have we overcome them? How do they affect us at work? How do they affect our emotions? How did they affect our childhoods? What are the advantages of being learning disabled? Why do so many famous people have learning disabilities?

Intermittently there are closed meetings, more like rap sessions, for learning disabled adults only.

ALDA is in the process of compiling a list of professionals who are available to assist LD adults. Now it is beginning to establish relations with other groups of disabled persons to strengthen its own efforts and theirs.

Recreation activities have included a leisurely walk through Washington's Georgetown, an outing to see a performance of "Godspell," bowling, and parties for the fun of it.

Mike Isard puts it this way: "Everybody feels a part of the group. It's a comfortable atmosphere where people feel free to talk things out and express their points of view. We enjoy each other's company. That's the most important thing."

ALDA is a relatively new organization that already means a great deal to people who've dealt with their handicaps, often alone, since childhood. As the program of public information continues, more people will be able to say with Patrick Lee, "We're not losers. We're winners. We're just a little bit different. We're just looking to be accepted as we are."

With ALDA there to help, that should be a lot easier.

—Lynn Park

Ms. Park is on the PCEH communications staff.

For more information on ALDA, write or send a cassette tape to: Association of Learning Disabled Adults, P.O. Box 9722, Friendship Station, Washington, DC 20016.

Resources Available for Disabled People

A LEARNING DISABILITY is a handicap, therefore information can be obtained from organizations that serve handicapped people, such as:

Closer Look, Box 1492, Washington D.C. 20013 (202-833-4160) is a national clearinghouse established for parents of handicapped children. Adults with special needs may also request information on employment rights, higher education, and groups concerned with disabled people. Closer Look also knows about services provided by State agencies, i.e., adult education, protection and advocacy systems, and vocational rehabilitation.

Mainstream Inc., 1200 15th Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20005 provides information on federal civil rights laws to employers, disabled individuals, advocates and other interested people. A free newsletter called In-the-Mainstream has stories on issues that concern handicapped people. It is available on tape. A national toll-free hotline (800-424-8089) answers questions about legislation that affects handicapped people.

To locate other learning disabled adults in your area, write to:

ACLD Adult Committee, 4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15234 (412-231-7977) It is an organization of learning disabled adults who work within the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD).

When looking for work, try your State's office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which provides counseling and evaluative services. Many have a list of available jobs. However, it is important to remember that they are legislatively mandated to help the most severely disabled people first.

The federal government has a selective placement program for handicapped people. Call the federal job information center which is listed in the white pages of the telephone directory under "U.S. Government."

AFL-CIO's Human Resource Development Institute (HRDI) helps handicapped people find jobs and helps employers hire handicapped applicants. Their staff works with clients on vocational evaluation, job development and placement. To find out if there is a HRDI representative in your area, write Handicapped Coordinator, AFL-CIO-HRDI, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 or call 202-638-3914.

To get a list of college programs that will accommodate for learning disabilities, send $1.00 to ACLD, 4156 Library

Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15234.

Partners in Publishing (PIP) sells a newsletter, a directory of college programs for learning disabled students and a "handbook of free and inexpensive aids to college and career." For a publication list, write Partners in Publishing, P.O. Box 50347, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74150.

Recorded books are provided by two organizations:

Recordings for the Blind, Inc., 215 E. 58th Street, NYC, N.Y. 10022, tapes educational books. They will record textbooks not in their 45,000 volume library at the request of blind or print-handicapped students. To use their services, you need to be certified by a qualified person such as a doctor, therapist or counselor.

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542 (202-882-5500), supplies free recorded books and the equipment needed to listen to them. It's a special collection of fiction and nonfiction, including classics, romances, science fiction, current bestsellers, gothic novels, mysteries, western, and how-to books. To use their services, you must be certified by a doctor, as having a "reading disability due to organic dysfunction."

Experiments with diet and exercise are producing new breakthroughs for people with learning disabilities. In many cases the disability disappears or recedes to the point where it does not interfere with daily activities such as studying or working. The secret is dealing with learning disability as a physical imbalance, not as a personality or emotional disturbance.

A leading research center on this new approach is The New York Institute for Child Development, Inc., 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 (212-686-3630).

The Feingold Association recommends an additive- and salicylate-free diet for hyperactive children and adults. Support groups are all over the country. For information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Feingold Association of the U.S., Drawer A-G, Holtsville, N.Y. 11742.

Sam D. Clements, Executive Director, Child Study Center, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Arkansas 72211, has written a comprehensive bibliography on learning disabled adults. He will send it to interested people who provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope.